number of foreign tourists who visited India during last five years are as follows:

Year	Foreign tourist Arrivals	%Change
1993	1764830	--
1994	1886433	6.9
1995	2123683	12.6
1996	2287860	7.7
1997	2374094	3.8

The international tourist arrivals in the country registered positive growth during each of the last five years.

(c) to (e) There is a perception in overseas markets that India is outpriced due to high rates of published tariffs in some of the hotels at Mumbai and Delhi. The prices in India for all other facilities availed by the tourists including internal transportation, restaurants, shopping, entry fee in tourist places, etc. are reasonable. However, no formal study nas been conducted in this regard.

Buddhist Tourist Circuit Train

1232. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Buddhist tourist circuit train organised by ITDC has not been successful during the inaugural run;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have any plan to make the tour more entertaining; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It is true that the operation of the train has not been successful in the initial stages because the awareness about its operation has not reached the travel agents, tour operators and the intending users in India and abroad in full measure

(c) and (d) The Baudh Parikrama Train is supposed to provide a pilgrimage journey. The train journey is during the nights. The sightseeing tours are part of the day journeys in the pilgrimage package of Buddhist shrines.

Steps to Attract Foreign Tourists

1233. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state the steps taken to attract foreign tourists in India, especially in Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): Government of India is giving special emphasis to the promotion of Tourism to India and to the State of Jammu & Kashmir through its 18 Tourist Offices abroad and through Indian Missions located overseas.

Offices of Foreign Missions in India are also regularly briefed by the State Government to remove misconceptions about Kashmir.

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India regularly organises familiarisation trips to various parts of the country for Media, Trade and journalists from overseas markets.

Officers of Ministry of Tourism who were recently posted in Overseas markets were given a familiarisation trip to the State of Jammu & Kashmir before their posting.

The J & K State Tourism Department is setting up a Web site on the Internet for keeping latest information about tourist facilities as well as arrivals available through out the World. Similarly, the Ministry of Tourism is also setting up a web site on India.

Expansion Plan of ITDC

1234. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether ITDC plans expansion despite impending sell off;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures envisaged to check falling profits of ITDC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) With a view to develop tourism, ITDC have decided to construct new hotels at Chandigarh and Anandpursahib. As regards disinvestment of ITDC, no decision has so far been taken by the Government.

(c) The measures taken by ITDC to check declining trend of profitability include *inter alia* enhanced emphasis on product improvement; aggressive marketing plan; training/motivation of manpower, periodical review of performance at Corporate/Ministry level and cost control by exercising economy in expenditure.

Development Plan for Domestic and External Tourism

1235. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the comprehensive development plan for domestic and external tourism in the country;

(b) the profits from tourism industry in the country; and

(c) the measures to be taken by Government for development of tourism industry in the North-Eastern region State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) The comprehensive development plan for tourism includes Infrastructure development, Product development and diversification, Promotion of self employment opportunities, Tourist Facilitation, Human Resource Development, Research and Computerisation, Promotion and Marketing, Environmental Protection and Cultural Preservation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Provision of Incentives and Strengthening the organisation.

(b) The Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism during 1997-98 were Rs. 11032.69 crores.

(c) To develop tourism in the North Eastern region, Ministry of Tourism has extended Central financial assistance during 1997-98 as per details given below:

State	Projects	Amt. Sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)
Arunachal Pradesh	9	270.00
Assam	12	288.88
Manipur	5	186.11
Meghalaya	5	85.70
Mizoram	6	142.45
Nagaland	4	116.90
Tripura	8	126.68
TOTAL	49	1217.72

For the year 1998-99, Ministry of Tourism has prioritised 77 projects amounting to Rs. 1603 lakhs for Central Financial Assistance to North Eatern region.

कैलाश-मानसरोवर मार्ग

1236. **श्री कुशोक नवांग चम्बा स्तनजिन:** क्या पर्यटन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या लद्दाख के लोगों ने कैलाश-मानसरोवर मार्ग को वहां से खोलने के लिए कई बार सरकार से अनुरोध किया है;

(ख) क्या देनचोक से यह मार्ग न केवल आसान और सुरक्षित है बल्कि कैलाश तक की दूरी दो या तीन दिन में तय की जा सकती है; और

(ग) सरकार द्वारा इस संबंध में अब तक उठाए गए ठोस कदमों का ब्यौरा क्या है?

पर्यटन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री ओमाक अपांग): (क) से (ग) कैलाश मानसरोवर यात्रा की बढ़ती हुई लोकप्रियता, इसके वर्तमान मार्ग में आने वाली बाधाओं और सीमा के क्षेत्रों, विशेष रूप से लद्दाख के निवासियों के अनुरोध पर इस यात्रा के लिए एक विकल्प मार्ग बनाए जाने की संभावना वर्ष 1992 से विचाराधीन है। इस अवधि के दौरान चीन की ओर से काफी सुझाव रखे गए। वर्ष 1993 में यह प्रस्ताव किया गया कि एक विकल्प मार्ग, हिमाचल प्रदेश में शिमकी